CHURCH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Story of

INASMUCH MISSION

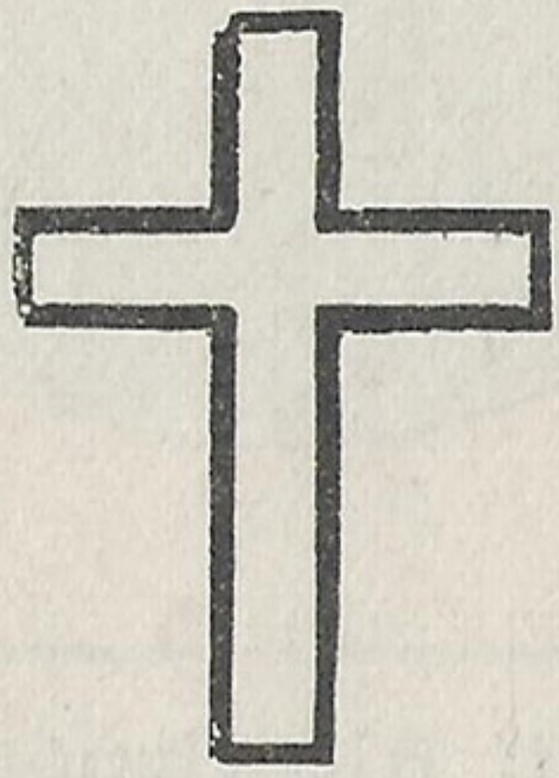
AND

GEORGE LONG

Its Founder

IN

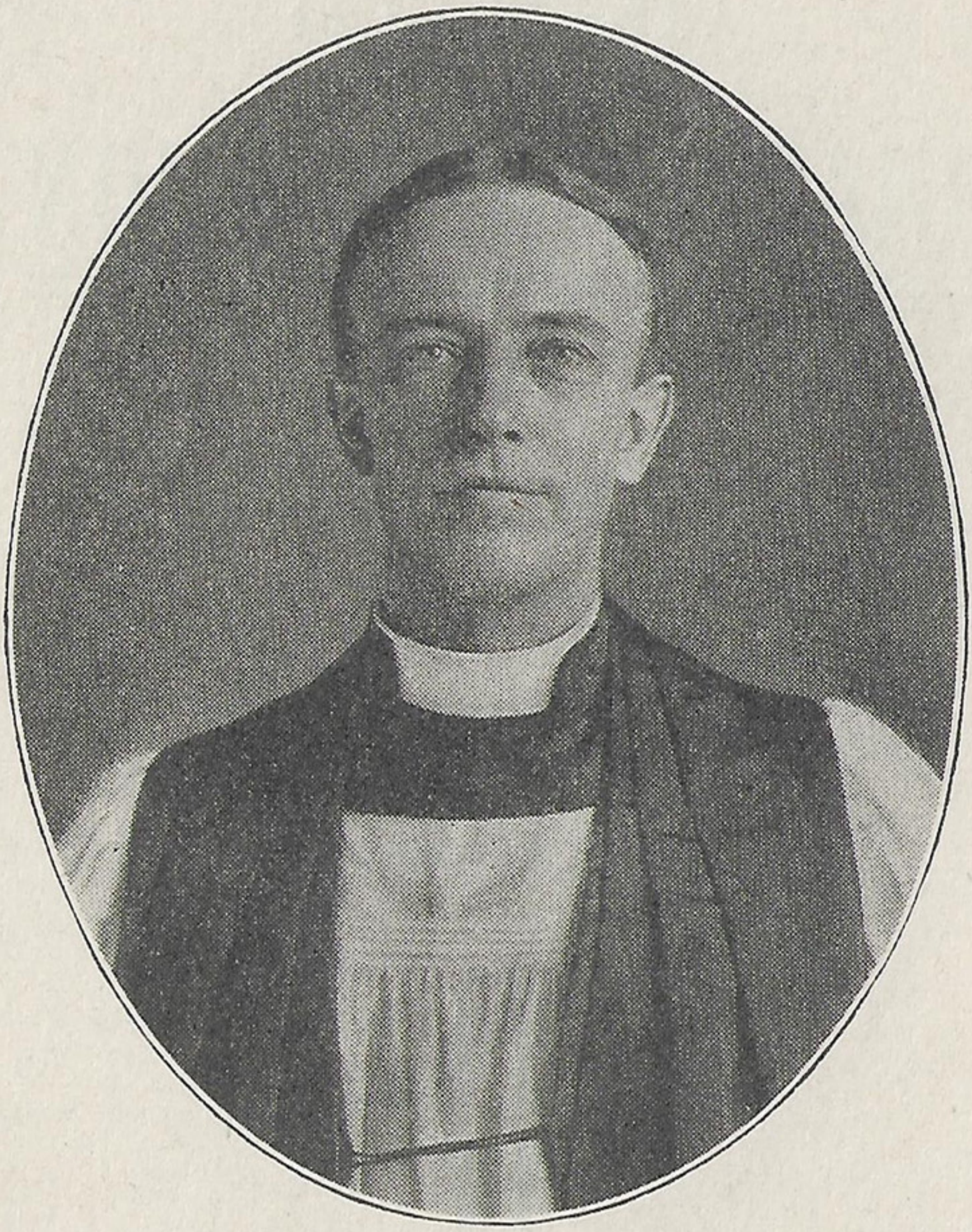
"Hell's Half Acre"



"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me."
—*Matt. 25 : 40.*

By H. F. YEAKEL

1011 Locust Street Philadelphia, Pa.



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The Story of "Inasmuch" Mission

By H. F. YEAKEL

The passing of "Hell's Half Acre," or how four devout men, with a capital of twenty-seven cents, planted the cross of Christ in a harvest field of sin, would be a fitting title for a historic work depicting the origin, growth and usefulness of the "Inasmuch" mission, which has, within the short space of three years, cleaned out one of the most degraded vice centers of Philadelphia and made the neighborhood famous as the location of a mission for fallen men which has no parallel throughout the world. To give a brief idea of this wonderful story is the purpose of these pages.

Not alone is the mission remarkable, but its founder is a man of whom any city might well be proud. Risen from the ranks of hoboes, redeemed from among panhandlers and drunkards, he has consecrated his life to the "other fellow" and is now one of the city's most honored citizens and possibly doing more good in his particular way among the down-and-outers than any other agency devoted to uplift work.

The handsome new $100,000 edifice of the "Inasmuch" mission, located at 1011 Locust street, is a monument to one man's interest in the welfare of his fellows. This man is George Long, once the object of small charity and known to the police of a dozen cities, who founded the mission three years ago, after turning from a life of debauchery to one of Christian service. This man, who has done so much for humanity, came to Philadelphia a tramp on the bumpers of a freight train. He was then like thousands who frequent the tenderloin of any great city. He is now one man in many thousands who has a call and heeds it, has a past and cares not who knows it. He is the man who does not desert the ship—the hero who dashes back into the flames to save another after having been saved himself.

When converted George Long did not merge into the general vortex of respectability,

with no other evidence of success to the credit of Christianity than one convert upon the statistics of the slums. The transformation was too great a thing to be so lightly passed over. In the light of his own judgment there never was a worse sinner than he, and if redemption could reach him and do so much for one of his class, what could it not do for the teeming thousands among whom he jostled day by day. This was the thought that gave birth to the dream of "Inasmuch" mission, and it was the constant revolving of this thought in his mind that built an air castle in his awakened brain, and, like all true optimists, he began to live his dream.

THE HUMBLE BEGINNING.

On the twenty-fourth day of March, 1911, the new mission came into being in a dilapidated dwelling on Locust street, in the heart of "Hell's Half Acre." The first edifice that housed the great undertaking was one of a group of twenty houses owned by Dr. George Woodward. All of the houses in the row had been used for years as disorderly resorts, but had been standing idle since coming into possession of Dr. Woodward, because he would not rent them for illegitimate purposes and respectable tenants could not be induced to enter the neighborhood.

It was with an incredulous smile that the well-known Episcopal layman listened to George Long's "dream" of what he wanted to do in the district and how he intended to do it. Consent was at last given the reformed man to occupy 1011 for one month. Dr. Woodward was skeptical about the staying powers of converted bums, and he made no exception in Mr. Long's case. "One month," thought he, "will be about enough."

With no other assistance or encouragement than their combined capital of twenty-seven cents and the free use of a tumble-down house, that no one else wanted, the founder of "Inasmuch" gathered about him three of his pals and set to work cleaning out the first home of the mission. For several nights this little band was compelled to sleep on the floor

while the chill March wind whistled through the broken windows. It was faith in God alone that kept them at their seemingly hopeless task, and George Long's wonderful personality inspired his co-laborers with the beauty of his dream. They helped him chase his rainbow, knowing full well that no pot of gold rested at its base. He had resolved at the start not to ask any financial aid whatever, and, as the days passed by, the demand for a square meal became more and more insistent.

It was at this juncture, when the noble enterprise nearly died for want of food, that Rev. J. J. Joyce Moore, rector of St. Andrew's Protestant Episcopal Church, happened to pass the house, and noting the unusual activity, asked Mr. Long what it all meant. The rector was given a brief outline of the future mission, and to encourage the work he gave Mr. Long $5 with which to buy beds. That night the cleaners slept on bare springs, for the five-spot would not reach for mattresses and quilts.

George Streaker, president of the Junior Brotherhood of St. Andrew, was the next answer to the ardent prayers of this intrepid leader. He too looked in one day and wanted to know what was going on. So impressed was he with the earnestness of the men and their hungry look that he gave them $1.50 for food.

Month piled upon month and still the founder of this new kind of mission remained on the job. Some of the conversions accomplished during those early days of the mission have been lasting also, and the lists of the city's respectable citizens have been recruited from the human wreckage that drifted into 1011 Locust street.

BISHOP RHINELANDER ENTERS THE WORK.

Mr. Long soon saw the magnitude of the undertaking he had begun and became anxious for assistance that would enable him to increase the scope of his mission. His accommodations were limited and he could not begin to take care of the increasing throngs

which applied for aid. It took more bath rooms than the limited quarters afforded to wash the degenerates and more money was needed to feed the hungry.

It was just at this time that Bishop Rhinelander came to Philadelphia a total stranger and took up his residence at 1025 Spruce street. Like the proverbial stranger in a strange land the new Bishop at once became interested in his surroundings and looking out of his back window the congested district of "Hell's Half Acre" met his gaze. Being favorably impressed with the historic beauty of Philadelphia, his curiosity was naturally aroused at the squalid view that met his eyes, and that, too, so near the old and aristocratic quarter. An informal inquiry disclosed to him that there was one bright spot in that hideous landscape of degradation and that spot was the "Inasmuch" mission. He was directed to make the acquaintance of Mr. Long if desirous of further information about that section of Philadelphia's underworld.

It seemed more than chance that brought the Bishop and the reformer together. At once there sprung up in the mind of the former a true estimate of the worth of the latter, and the outcome of the first conference was the calling together, by the bishop about a year later, the first board of management of the mission, which gave to the feeble effort the impetus that has transformed it from a venture into one of the city's established institutions.

The first board of managers, as appointed by Bishop Rhinelander on October 12, 1902, consisted of the following prominent persons: Arthur V. Morton, treasurer; Mrs. George Long, secretary; Rev. J. J. Joyce Moore, Rev. David M. Steele, Rev. G. F. Walenta, Herbert M. Goddard, M. D., Morris W. Stroud, George Woodward, M. D., and George W. Pepper. Bishop Rhinelander assumed the presidency of this original board and has occupied that position ever since.

In his address before the 129th convention of the Diocese of Pennsylvania, held at Phila-

delphia in May, 1913, the Bishop referred to the mission as follows:

"Last fall, at the request of the Superintendent, Mr. Long, the notable work of this mission was put into my charge. I appointed to help me a commlttee of seven clergymen and laymen. The work has gone on increasing. There has been really an amazing response to Mr. Long's wisdom and devotion. None of those, who were privileged to be present at the second anniversary meeting, held shortly after Easter, in Witherspoon Hall, can ever forget it. As a matter of fact, it was this meeting which induced one of our generous lay people to give $50,000 to build for the mission an adequate home for the care and housing of the throngs who came to it. This building will provide in the neighborhood of two hundred beds, and will make excellent provision for the mission service. At present, and until a better and more permanent way is found, the mission will be managed as it is now, that is, by a voluntary committee, under the bishop."

THE "ANGEL OF HELL'S HALF ACRE."

Cupid played a prominent role in the unusual drama of this unusual man and the erratic little god of all hearts produced the unusual scene of a marriage between a society woman of New York and the reformed hobo of everywhere and nowhere. The beautiful woman who is now his wife first met Mr. Long while doing rescue work at Blackwell's Island, New York, when the man who is now her husband was the object of her tender sympathy and compassion because of the wretched state in which she found him. Christian interest ripened into deep womanly love as the future Mrs. Long watched and helped her future husband struggle upward to respectability through the slime of sin into which he had fallen.

It was in Philadelphia, shortly after Mr. Long had opened the mission, that this courageous woman braved the displeasure of her family and friends and married the man in spite of his past. By that act she was disowned by her family, and she has been completely ostracized ever since.

Entering into the work with her whole soul, Mrs. Long has labored shoulder to shoulder with her husband in the work to which he had dedicated his life. So successful has she been among the men and women of the underworld that she is affectionately known throughout the southern section of the city as the "Angel of Hell's Half Acre." One of Mrs. Long's most interesting activities is a Sunday School

of more than seventy-five children, gathered from the neighborhood. The class is composed of boys and girls, blacks and whites, Jews and Gentiles. Hardly one of them would be received into a regular church Sunday school, yet Mrs. Long loves them and they love their teacher with an affection that is both pathetic and sincere.

To the inspiration of his wife Mr. Long ascribes the real success of his endeavor, declaring that she has been the guiding star of his ambition.

MRS. GEORGE WOODWARD'S GENEROUS GIFT.

The most important event in the history of the mission was the second anniversary, which was held in Witherspoon Hall on March twenty-fourth, 1913. The first three rows of the spacious auditorium were reserved for redeemed converts and it was when these regenerated men and women rose and faced the great audience and told how the "Inasmuch" mission had turned them from the pursuits of wickedness to those of respectability and usefulness that Philadelphia got its first public demonstration of the value of such an undertaking.

Mrs. Woodward, wife of Dr. Woodward, was among those in the audience and so interested did she become in the great work that she at once agreed to erect a suitable building in which Mr. Long might carry out his original dream. The founder had made good in no uncertain manner and his efforts had been rewarded far beyond his fondest expectations.

This was the beginning of the present chapter in the history of "Inasmuch" mission. No money was spared by this charitable woman and the erection of the new building was begun along lines suggested by its founder. It is of solid concrete, four stories high, and equipped with every convenience. The architecture is of the severest type, and beauty has been sacrificed for utility. There is a large auditorium for religious services, a popular-priced restaurant that caters to public trade, a bowling alley, pool tables, shower baths and

every provision for the accommodation of fallen men is at hand.

THE PLAN OF MANAGEMENT.

The purpose of the mission, as outlined by Mr. Long, is to clothe, feed and shelter those who apply for assistance, and through religion and social service strive to reclaim fallen men to the ranks of respectable society.

There are three stages of development through which wonderful results are being accomplished, namely:

Newcomers enter the first class, which includes temporary shelter and care. The second class is made up of those who show evidence of improvement and wish to become self-supporting. Positions are sought for these men of the second class and they are given every opportunity to make good. The third, or highest, class is composed of men who have proved, through a period of probation, that they are sincere in their reformation. These men are given private rooms and accorded every privilege of the institution and assisted in securing employment by which they may become independent and return to society as regenerated men worthy of respect and confidence. The last stage of this process of regeneration is similar to the plan of the Young Men's Christian Association.

There is no color line in this mission, in fact "Inasmuch" is the only mission in Philadelphia which accepts negroes on a par with whites. Among the converts who have gone out into the world from this institution are men of every nationality and one colored convert has been returned to the ministry.

Business is combined with religion in a marked degree, and every man must act a man's part. There is no danger of an applicant imposing upon the management, for Mr. Long is able to deal with all comers as a scientist deals with bacteria. No "con game" can cloud his better judgment, for he is a past-master at all the tricks of the panhandler.

The institution itself must show results, and Mr. Long intends to make it produce the returns for which it was established. Statistics are carefully kept by means of a card index

and the record of every man who enters the mission can be produced at any time.

During the first two years of the mission, when it was not possible to keep records as carefully as at present, figures in Mr. Long's possession show that there were in attendance during that time 86,766 persons, 38.164 men were given lodging, 101,087 meals were served and professed conversions amounted to 5502.

From its very beginning "Inasmuch" has made an enviable record in the world of missions and as an agency for the reclamation of men it has few equals and no superiors. From all over the civilized world have come letters of praise for its founder and requests for information as to his plan of action.

The key to his phenomenal success is ascribed by Mr. Long to the redeeming power of God, the influence of kind friends, and generous publicity which he has been very fortunate in receiving from the newspapers of the Quaker City.

"There is no secret to a work of this kind," says Mr. Long. "All that is necessary is an earnest desire to help the unfortunates who are drifting farther and farther away from the grace of God through their sin and the lack of human sympathy."

Every man is placed upon his honor and treated as an equal. There are no odious rules, nor any of the objectionable features of the "industrial" mission. The only notice to be seen about the building is the following which is so simple, and yet so gripping, that even the hardened sinner yields to its gentle request:

> "Everything you get here is free, and comes from God. If He through His great love helps you, let us remember the other fellow who is in the same condition we once were."

All of the current expenses of the institution have been met by means of contributions voluntarily presented to the mission.

That the system is good and the results gratifying is amply shown by records and recommendations from employers on file in the mission office. Statistics prove that about 60 per cent. of the men received by the institution are permanently reformed.

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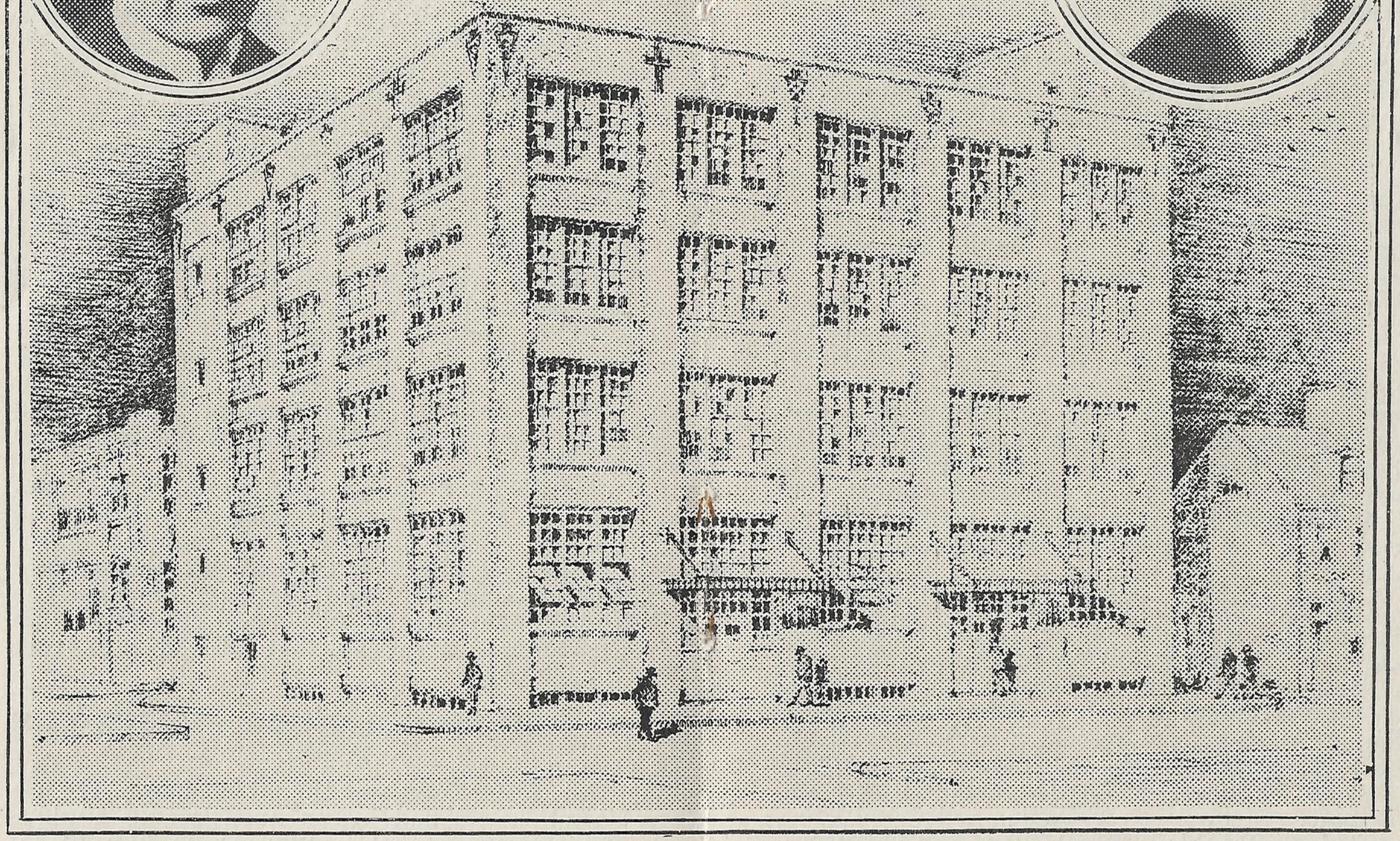
GUTE-KUNST



George Long

The Home of Inasmuch Mission, 1011 Locust St., Philadelphia, Pa.

Mrs. George Long